

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. An image capturing apparatus, comprising:

a body having a front face, a back face, and a side face provided between said front face and said back face;

a lens section, provided on said body, operable to form an image; and

a lens barrier operable to cover said front face, said back face and said side face of said body and to pivotally move around an axis substantially parallel to an optical axis of said lens section.

2. An image capturing apparatus as claimed in claim 1, wherein said lens barrier has a grip for a hand of a user to be placed during image capturing.

3. An image capturing apparatus as claimed in claim 2, wherein said lens barrier pivotally moves around an axis generally proximate to a center of said body and is capable of stopping on a right side or a left side of said body.

4. An image capturing apparatus as claimed in claim 3, further comprising a mode selector operable to change a first operation mode to a second operation mode in accordance with a position of said lens barrier,

said operation modes include at least a capture mode in which said lens section is exposed and a non-capture mode in which said lens section is covered by said lens barrier, and

said mode selector sets said capture mode when said lens barrier stops on the right side or the left side of said body.

5. An image capturing apparatus as claimed in claim 1, wherein said body includes an arc-shaped portion, and said lens barrier pivotally moves along said arc-shaped portion.

6. An image capturing apparatus as claimed in claim 5, wherein said body is arranged to have a substantially cylindrical shape in which said front face and said back face are circular.

7. An image capturing apparatus as claimed in claim 5, wherein said lens barrier pivotally moves around an axis generally proximate to a center of said body and is capable of stopping on a right side or a left side of said body.

8. An image capturing apparatus as claimed in claim 7, further comprising a mode selector operable to change one of a plurality of operation modes to another operation mode in accordance with a position of said lens barrier,

 said operation modes include at least an image capture mode in which said lens section is exposed and a non-capture mode in which said lens section is covered by said lens barrier, and

 said mode selector sets said image capture mode when said lens barrier stops on the right side or the left side of said body.

9. An image capturing apparatus as claimed in claim 5, wherein said lens barrier further includes legs provided on a face thereof covering said side face of said body, and said legs support said image capturing apparatus when said legs are positioned on a bottom side of said body.

10. An image capturing apparatus as claimed in claim 9, further comprising a mode selector operable to change one of a plurality of operation modes to another operation mode in accordance with a position of said lens barrier,

 said operation modes include at least a self-timer capture mode, and

 said mode selector sets said self-timer capture mode when said lens barrier stops on the bottom side of said body.

11. An image capturing apparatus as claimed in claim 9, further comprising a mode selector operable to change one of a plurality of operation modes to another operation mode in accordance with a position of said lens barrier,

 said operation modes include at least a playback mode, and
 said mode selector sets said playback mode when said lens barrier stops on the bottom side of said body.

12. An image capturing apparatus as claimed in claim 1, further comprising a connection part operable to connect said image capturing apparatus to external equipment, and

 said lens barrier includes an opening operable to expose said connection part.

13. An image capturing apparatus as claimed in claim 1, wherein said lens barrier is removable from said body.

14. An image capturing apparatus, comprising:

 a body having a front face and a back face, a side face provided between said front face and said back face;

 first and second lens sections, provided on said body, each operable to converge an image; and

 first and second lens barriers, provided on said body, operable to protect said first and second lens sections, respectively, wherein

 said first and second lens sections are substantially parallel to each other, and

 said first and second lens barriers cover at least parts of said front face, said back face and said side face, and are pivotally movable, independently of each other, around corresponding axes which are substantially parallel to respective optical axes of said first lens section and said second lens section to protect said first and second lens sections,

respectively.

15. An image capturing apparatus as claimed in claim 14, wherein said front face and said back face of said body have generally heart-like shapes;

 said first lens section and said second lens section being arranged on an upper portion of said front face.

16. An image capturing apparatus as claimed in claim 14, wherein said first and second lens sections are operable to capture two images simultaneously,

 said image capturing apparatus has operation modes including at least a single-image capture mode, in which only one image is captured, and a double-image capture mode in which two images are simultaneously captured, and

 said single-image capture mode is set when only said first lens section is exposed and said double-image capture mode is set when both said first and second lens sections are exposed.

17. An image capturing apparatus as claimed in claim 16, wherein said first and second lens sections are operable to capture a stereoscopic image in said double-image capture mode.

18. An image capturing apparatus as claimed in claim 16, wherein said first and second lens sections are operable to capture two images with different zooming power in said double-image capture mode.

19. An image capturing apparatus as claimed in claim 14, wherein said first and second lens barriers are removable from said body.

20. An image capturing apparatus as claimed in claim 1, wherein said body has an outer periphery, and wherein said axis of said lens barrier is positioned at said outer periphery of said body.

21. An image capturing apparatus, comprising:

a body having a front face, a back face and a side face provided between said front face and said back face;

an image forming lens section provided on said body, said image forming lens section having an optical axis; and

a cover member having a first section, a second section and a third section arranged to face said front face, said back face and said side face of said body, respectively, said cover member being supported by said body on an axis extending substantially in parallel with said optical axis of said image forming lens section.

22. An image capturing apparatus as claimed in claim 21, wherein said second section of said cover member includes an arc-shaped portion.

23. An image capturing apparatus as claimed in claim 21, wherein said body has an outer periphery, and wherein said axis of said cover is positioned at said outer periphery of said body.

2025 RELEASE UNDER E.O. 14176